

DOD report says Soviets seek space dominance

By Walter Andrews
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The Soviet Union aims to acquire military superiority in outer space in order to deny its use to other nations and at the same time provide support for Soviet combat units on earth, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) warned yesterday.

The charge was contained in a 36-page DIA analysis of Soviet military space doctrine released yesterday by the Pentagon in the wake of an interview with Soviet President Konstantin Chernenko published Wednesday. The report was completed in August.

Although such reports for internal government use are not usually made public, a Pentagon spokesman denied there is any connection between the interview and the public release of the DIA report. He said the report has been undergoing Pentagon security clearance since its completion August 1.

Mr. Chernenko was quoted in the interview as saying that improved U.S.-Soviet relations might be possible if the United States showed interest in agreement on one of four essential questions, one of them being the demilitarization of outer space.

"Western analyses of the Soviet

Diplomats in Moscow say Chernenko's comments on arms control were probably aimed at influencing the U.S. presidential debate and election. Page 6A.

space program provide convincing evidence of Moscow's intention to acquire military superiority in outer space," the Pentagon intelligence report says. Further, it says evidence shows that the Soviets intend to acquire a superiority sufficient both to deny the use of outer space to other states and to assure maximum space-based support for

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Soviet offensive and defensive combat operations on land, at sea, in air, and in outer space."

The intelligence agency report says the Soviet Union has a dynamic, expanding and "prodigious" military space program. Civilian scientific and economic aspects of the Soviet space program are entirely subordinate to the military functions, DIA says.

"This determination is necessary because Soviet propaganda would have the world believe that the Soviet space program is entirely peaceful in nature, dedicated only to scientific and economic pursuits," the defense intelligence study concludes.

The DIA report notes that it is difficult to distinguish between military offensive and defensive capabilities in the strange and new environment of outer space.

However, it concludes: "the military nature of much of the U.S.S.R.'s space capabilities is overwhelmingly offensive in character, since that is the essence of their military doctrine."

Because overall Soviet military doctrine stresses the offense, "it

would be illogical to expect the Kremlin to strive for anything less in outer space, especially considering the military significance of this environment," the DIA said.

The ability to provide support from space for combat operations on earth "requires freedom to operate in, if not outright dominance of, outer space," the report says.

It comments that Soviet military doctrine fully recognizes the need to disrupt, if not destroy, enemy command-and-control and communications systems on earth.

"Outer space is becoming more and more vital, if not essential, to military forces in this respect, and therefore the Soviet leadership can be expected to pursue" superiority in space, the intelligence agency says.

It mentions another Pentagon report on Soviet military power, published in April, which says the Soviets have tested two laser-beam weapons with sufficient power to shoot down satellites.

Early in 1982, another report, a secret Central Intelligence Agency assessment, was inadvertently read into the public record during a congressional hearing by a congressman.

The assessment read: "If our understanding of Soviet space doc-

trine is correct... [it] will allow the Soviets to begin to place in orbit in the early 1990s, systems capable of effectively attacking... ground, sea and air targets from space."

In 1967, the United States and the Soviet Union signed what is called the Outer Space Treaty, which prohibits the placing of nuclear or any other weapons of "mass destruction" in orbit around the earth, on the moon or any other celestial body, or anywhere else in outer space.

It also limits the use of the moon and other celestial bodies in space to peaceful purposes.

The DIA report notes that prior to the 1967 treaty, Soviet propaganda recognized the need for a military space-based capability. Following the treaty, mention of this aspect was gradually restricted, until today the Soviets refuse to admit any military element in their space program, the DIA said.

Such a refusal can only mean that the Soviet leadership, rather than merely counteracting [defensively] U.S. moves, is actually seeking military superiority in outer space for offensive, as well as defensive purposes, the defense intelligence report concludes.